



The HHSA Connection

THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

MARCH 2007

Editor's Note: March is National Social Work Month. Please see pages 4-7 for several special stories about Agency Social Workers and the tremendous work they do.

Dr. Splitgerber Named President of California Veterans Service Assoc.

It might mean an increased workload, but Dr. **Tom Splitgerber** doesn't mind the addition to the life-changing work he's already doing. Splitgerber, the San Diego County Veterans Service Officer, has been named the President of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

"So far, I'm enjoying it very much. There is a little increased workload and sometimes it can be a wild ride, depending on what's going on," said Splitgerber. "We're especially busy now with young veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan."

There are 253,000 veterans in San Diego County with up to 600,000 dependents, according to Splitgerber. That keeps his office busy. "We do a little bit of everything," he said. "My main job is to be the spokesman and get the word out (about our services.)"

That's something he'll be doing on a bigger stage now, thanks to the Association. He'll potentially be asked to appear before legislative committees in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. *--continued on Page 2*

People attending the North Regions' Childhood Obesity Forum listen to Dr. Nick Yphantides.



North Regions Hold Childhood Obesity Community Forum

Childhood obesity is a significant and growing health concern that has reached epidemic proportions. It exposes children to serious health problems, now and in the future, since overweight children are more likely to become overweight adults and suffer from cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes in adulthood.

In January, the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) North Regions' Healthy Communities and Lifestyles Initiative hosted the "North Regions Call to Action: Childhood Obesity Forum," to address this issue. The forum opened a dialogue with both local government and key community agencies to strengthen partnerships and discuss collaborative opportunities in the North Regions concerning childhood obesity.

More than 65 people attended, with participants representing a wide range of agencies, including government, a grower's association, schools, research, private business and community based organizations. The City of Del Mar offered their conference room as a venue for the event, recognizing the importance of government's role in supporting communities on this issue.

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A Message from Jean M. Shepard

Health and Human Services Agency Director

The year 2007 is beginning with some exciting changes in leadership in the Agency.

Welcome to **Jennifer Schaffer**, Ph.D., who started March 2 as the Deputy Director, **Behavioral Health Services**. Dr. Schaffer comes to the Agency from New York, where she was most recently the Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health in White Plains, NY. She has a proven track record of providing quality mental health and substance abuse services, and is anxious to bring her expertise to San Diego to assist in creating a first class Behavioral Health Services program.



Working closely with Dr. Schaffer will be **Alfredo Aguirre**, who is now the Mental Health Director for both Adult and Children's programs. Since serving as Acting Director of **Adult Mental Health Services** and Director of **Children's Mental Health**, Aguirre has done a stellar job in bringing these two systems of care together under a single leader. His expertise in mental health continues to serve this County well.

Susan Bower, formerly the Assistant Alcohol and Drug Administrator, **Alcohol and Drug Services**, is now the Acting Director for ADS. Her many years of experience in the field of substance abuse as well as her management skills make her a valuable member of the Behavioral Health team.

In **Public Health Services**, **Wilma Wooten**, M.D., M.P.H. has agreed to serve as the Interim Public Health Officer, filling the vacancy left with the departure of Dr. **Nancy Bowen**. Dr. Wooten has been with the County for six years. Her leadership and managerial skills, coupled with her clinical expertise, will serve the Agency and the community well in the public health arena.

Jean M. Shepard



Employees look over displays and pick up materials at one of the North Region Wellness Expos.

North County Holds Wellness Expos

North Regions' staff started the New Year off right by participating in two health expos held in North County in January. One was held at the North Inland Regional Center in Escondido and another at the North Coastal Regional Center in Oceanside.

The Health and Lifestyle Expos were coordinated by Spice of Life, a health and wellness company, and included over 30 exhibits ranging from health screenings and disaster preparedness, to food samplings and financial advisors.

Both events were a big hit, particularly since they were the result of a suggestion by North Coastal Family Resource Center staff to hold a fair locally. While similar events are held around the County, staff in North County find it difficult to participate given the travel time involved.

Despite the rain, over 200 employees participated in the two expos and enjoyed the festivities while picking up some new health tips.

Splitgerber named CACVSO President, continued

Splitgerber is proud of the **San Diego County Veterans Services Office**. The staff of eight is the "highest producing office in the state of California," according to Splitgerber. "We just have good people."

"It's like a family. We just work well together."



Dr. Tom Splitgerber accepts congratulations and the gavel as the new President of CACVSO.



CCS client Cody presents his handmade Valentine to a resident of the Country Hills Healthcare Center.

Seniors Receive Special Valentines

On February 14, about a dozen children touched the hearts of senior residents of the Country Hills Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center in a special Valentine's Day celebration.

Therapists from the [California Children Services \(CCS\) El Cajon Medical Therapy Unit \(MTU\)](#) worked with the children to create over 50 handmade cards, deliver them to the skilled nursing facility and participate in a holiday social.

The CCS MTU is a special program of the Agency that provides occupational and physical therapy for children with eligible conditions. The Valentine's Day event provided a unique opportunity for the children to utilize both their gross motor skills (e.g. dancing at the social) and fine motor skills (e.g. cutting and writing the cards).

In addition, this event promoted interaction between the children, their families and the residents, and created an awareness of each other's disabilities. In one special moment, a mother broke into tears when she realized that the senior resident to whom she was speaking had the same medical condition as her child.

Over 80 children, their parents, MTU staff, and senior residents participated in the Valentine's Day celebration. Due to the success of the event, the El Cajon MTU and Country Hills Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center plan to partner on other occasions in the future.

Childhood Obesity Forum, continued

The action-packed agenda included recognition and celebration of accomplishments of the Healthy Communities and Lifestyles Committees by HHSA North Regions Deputy Director **Nick Macchione**, who commended participants for their dedication in being part of the obesity solution.

Dr. Nick Yphantides, co-chair of the County's Childhood Obesity "Call to Action," (which was spearheaded by Supervisors **Pam Slater-Price** and **Ron Roberts**) and Cheryl Moder, the County's Childhood Obesity Initiative director, provided an overview of the Call to Action, accomplishments during this first year of implementation, and future directions for the seven domain groups.

The forum also included asset mapping activities of childhood obesity projects in the North Regions and closing comments by HHSA North Coastal/North Inland Assistant Deputy Director **Donna Hand**.

Next steps from the forum include compiling participants' current strategies to address childhood obesity, cross-threading efforts with the North Regions Healthy Communities and Lifestyles Initiative partners, and aligning our regional efforts with the countywide activities of the "Call to Action."



*CCS Supervising Therapist **Patrick Wilkens**, Occupational Therapist **Trishell Gorczyca** and one of their clients display handmade Valentines.*

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A Salute to National Social Work Month

Deaf Services Unit Fulfills a Need

The Agency's new Child Welfare Services (CWS) Deaf Services Unit is continuing to grow and mature, but already the four Social Workers assigned to the unit and their supervisor are making great strides in meeting the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in San Diego County.

Before the creation of the Unit, the Agency was able to offer only limited services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients. Interpreters often had to be arranged from outside services or family members of the clients were relied upon to relay information, which could result in some awkward moments or an unwillingness to discuss important issues.

"This is a unit that has received great support from the Board of Supervisors, our North Region Management team under Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** and **Mary Harris** (Director of CWS) in our development," said **Cindy Shelton**, Manager, CWS North Central Region. "We would not be here without their support."

The Deaf Services Unit began about five years ago with the hiring of **Lynnette Miller**, the County's first deaf Social Worker. At the time, Miller was doing most of the interaction with Deaf clients.

Slowly but surely, Miller starting working with others in the Agency to develop services and programs to reach out to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in the County. A Deaf Parents Group, American Sign Language classes, sign language tutoring and Deaf Domestic Violence groups among others were started.

For years, Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients were part of the Medically Fragile Unit in CWS. That ended about a year ago with the creation of the Deaf Services Unit.



"We realized we needed workers that could communicate directly with clients," said Miller.

Since then, the expansion of services offered has grown considerably. Three more Social Workers joined the Unit and a supervisor was assigned to work with them. There are usually about 30-40 active Deaf and Hard of Hearing cases and that number is growing as that community learns more about the services the Agency is now able to offer them.

"In December, **Michele Cannon** (the Unit's Investigator) had five referrals," said **Susan Solis**, the unit's supervisor. "In January, she had 10. The word is out in the community that we have the resources to work with them."

Even though they are housed in the North Region, the Deaf Services Unit serves the entire county. "If other regions receive a call, they call us," said Shelton.

American Sign Language is the fourth most commonly used language in San Diego County, and Shelton stresses the Unit will work with a case where anyone in the home is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

The unit has been invaluable in working with the community. Solis points out that they aren't just working with the Deaf or Hard of Hearing, they are working with a culture.

"If I go out as a deaf person and work with a deaf parent, they are very responsive," said Miller. "If a hearing person goes out with an interpreter, there is still a trust issue there. It's the direct communication that allows the parent to come

forward and use our services."

Kathy Shely, a social worker in the unit, says that one-on-one face-to-face communication is vital to the work they do. "Our children have voices too, and without our unit, their voices may not be heard," she said. "The ability to communicate is often lost with a third person."

Ranila Allen, one of the unit's continuing workers, added that a lot of the work the unit does is education. "A lot of what we do is education on the services we offer - things we can offer the community," she said.

The unit has worked with several other entities to successfully establish a Deaf Group Home in San Diego. In the past, Deaf or Hard of Hearing children that needed to be placed in a home had to be flown to Boston, New Mexico or other locations far away from their families, friends and communities.

"It's hard to reunify families because of the distance," said Miller. "We began reaching out to groups and encouraging them to open a home here in San Diego."

The group also has been able to get the technology they have needed. They have a videophone that allows them to see and communicate with clients and even children that have been placed in Boston. They have also been issued Sidekicks that allow for better communication amongst themselves in the field.

"If it was a multi-worker call, and perhaps even the police department was involved - trying to have a three- or four-way call was impossible," said Shely. "Trying to do something like a risk assessment on a cell phone? We had to call the office to find someone who was at a desk and could send an email."

The unit has another goal in sight:

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Adoptions Worker's Heart of Gold Shines Bright

Juliet Kwagala-Kyegimbo couldn't put the haunting images out of her mind and knew she had to do something about it. Besides working for the Agency as a Protective Service Worker in Adoptions and raising nine children herself, Kwagala-Kyegimbo began the enormous undertaking of starting an orphanage in her native Uganda.

"They (the orphans in Uganda) sleep in cardboard, eat out of garbage cans - they do anything to survive," she said. "While I was there I was just weeping and weeping and I could not stop. It haunts you and you cannot rest."

"If they can just live another day and eat. It's nothing for the kids to go three days without food and only have water. So many children are hopeless. There is a sadness in their eyes - they lost their parents, have no money and no one to take care of them."

For some people the story would end there when they returned to the U.S., figuring there wasn't much they could do on their own to change a situation like that. But not Kwagala-Kyegimbo. "I didn't have money, but I knew there must be some way I can help."

She began talking to a friend, who was able to provide the first large donation to get the orphanage project off the ground. That friend and three others serve as the board for the non-profit she formed to raise money for the orphanage.

Kwagala-Kyegimbo also has received tremendous support from the Agency and the County as a whole. "County Counsel has been very supportive," she said. "And my



Juliet Kwagala-Kyegimbo, in the pink sweater in the middle of the back row, and her nine children, six of whom she adopted when her sister was killed.



Some of the orphans in Uganda that Kwagala-Kyegimbo's organization has helped with clothing and supplies. Homes are now under construction for the children to live in and plans are under way for a multi-purpose building and school as well.

supervisor **Ed Campos** and our chief, **Heidi Staples**, have sent clothes and really believe in the cause."

Ed Campos, Protective Services Supervisor, said Kwagala-Kyegimbo's efforts on behalf of her orphanage are similar to her work for the County. "(The orphanage) is half a world away, and for her to pull it off is a task in and of itself," he said. "At the same time carrying off a difficult case load here - she's been able to tie the two together."

"She's a wonderful person and has an amazing heart. We see it every day with her clients. We're lucky to have her."

Kwagala-Kyegimbo was recently recognized as a community hero at a citizenship swearing-in ceremony in San Diego by retired Judge Peter Riddle. "I was recognized at a ceremony - I looked out and there were thousands. India, Bangladesh, Ghana, Sudan, all the countries were there; my story was told and people applauded."

There have been a few setbacks in the construction schedule, but she is hoping the orphanage opens very soon. There are six houses that are near completion and the goal is to house 70 children in seven houses when it opens. There will soon also be a multi-purpose building with a school, thanks to a tremendously generous donation from a recently-retired County Counsel employee who found a cause in the orphanage for the estate of her daughter, who recently passed away. The name of her daughter will be placed on the school there.

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A Salute to National Social Work Month

Special Response Unit Goes Above and Beyond

You only need to spend a few minutes with the members of the South Region's Special Response Unit to know you are around an extraordinary group of Agency employees.

After-hours respite nights, weekend events, feeding and clothing a needy family with community donations, employee toy drives - you name it and the Special Response Unit can deliver it.

The list of programs and projects they work on is seemingly endless as well. There are traditional programs like family preservation, relative home approval, placement and the Way Station. But the Special Projects Unit also gets involved through things like their creative prom dress project to their upcoming first-ever Kinship Conference.

The unit's manager, **Heidi Quiroz**, recognizes the importance of the things her group does for South Bay communities and their strong teamwork. "Everyone in my unit does more than they are assigned to do," she said. "They all go above and beyond."

"We all fit in to what each of us does. They all have their primary responsibilities, but they can be asked to do anything and we all support each other."

Their work is so respected by the community that businesses and other groups seek them out to make donations for County clients.

"We have such an established relationship here in the South Region. We don't have to go out and solicit donations; they call us and ask what we need," said Quiroz.

The group is especially proud of their

Special Response Unit

Heidi Quiroz, Unit Supervisor
Leticia Abrego, Placement Specialist
Luisa Coria, TDM Facilitator and Foster Parent Liaison
Lizeth Alvarez, Social Worker 1
Edith Lozares, IFPP Worker and Community Outreach
Jennifer Hancock, SAF
Gabriel Diaz, SW1
Luis Contreras, SW2
Megan George, Student Worker
Carmen Alvarado, Student Worker
Alejandra Arrellano, Volunteer

prom dress project. It allows girls in foster care to get low-cost prom dresses and boys to get inexpensive tuxedo rentals.

"Foster parents help us with this project and we get donations," said **Edith Lozares**, IFPP Worker and Community Outreach. "Girls are able to get \$200 dresses for around \$10 and boys are able to get cheap tux rentals and shoes."

Another popular event is the respite nights they partner with the YMCA and the Rotary Club. Some respite nights include Padres games.

The unit is also participating in the upcoming Day of the Child in Chula Vista on April 21. A week later, they will host their Youth Empowerment Summit.

The unit also spends a lot of time recruiting and retaining foster parents. "We go out to libraries to recruit foster parents, but we don't only want to recruit," said Quiroz. "We want to support the ones we have and our relative caregivers."

That's where the Kinship Conference comes in. The conference will focus on

assisting relative caregivers. The unit is also starting a hotline for foster parents providing after-hours for advice and support.

The reason the Unit does all these events and programs is simple: they care about their families and children.

"Saving placements is real important to our unit," said **Luisa Coria**, Team Decision Making Facilitator and Foster Parent Liaison. "The kids are what's important. We educate the parents and are here to be supportive."

"Luisa spends a lot of time listening - literally on the phone with a parent for hours just listening and offering support," according to Quiroz.

The unit also gets involved in internal events and things on their own time. One such event was a highly successful toy drive for two Mexican orphanages. It was an event that the employees did on their own time and co-workers donated the toys. They had originally intended to do the drive for one orphanage, but they had enough toys within four days, so they opted to adopt a second orphanage.

Whether it's helping their kids and families, or banding together on their own time to volunteer for events, these caring Agency employees enjoy what they do and why they do it.

"Sometimes we have to drop everything," said **Gabriel Diaz**, Social Worker I. "We have our whole day planned out and a group of five kids come in, and we all have to do what's needed."

"It's our second family," agreed Lozares. "It really is."

workers write spend a great deal of time educating lawyers, court employees and others (about Deaf culture.)"

If anyone can make it happen, it's The Deaf Services Unit. This group has succeeded in giving Deaf and Hard of Hearing San Diego County residents a stronger and clearer voice.

Stories from the Front Lines

We asked a few social workers to take a moment out of their busy schedules to share one of their "rewarding moments" with us.

Leticia Bravo, CCS, North Central Region

Bravo has been a Social Worker for 22 years, and recently had some clients who experienced a death in the family. "I was able to listen to them and help them with the grieving process and give them comfort," she said. "The family felt a lot better and it gave me a sense of satisfaction that I was a little piece of that process."

Angel Bennecke, Protective Services, Central Region

Bennecke is just completing her first year as a Social Worker, working in the Teen Unit. She has one client whose foster parent died. "We were able to get him into the San Diego State University summer camp for basketball and got it paid for. Now he's filling out applications

for scholarships and he's really trying to succeed. He wants to be a Social Worker."

Sumaya Dinglasan, CWS IFPP

Dinglasan will hit six years as a Social Worker in June. "One single mom was reunifying with her 8- and 5-year-olds and all she needed was a lot of support. With the right guidance, she was able to get the resources she needed. She still calls to give me updates even though the case is closed."

Adam Beer, CWS, Residential Children Services

Beer has been a Social Worker for 8 years. "One of the foster youth in a home had become quite bonded with his foster father, and we helped the foster parent adopt him and provide a permanent home. It was a happy ending for both the child and caregiver."

Adoptions Worker, Continued

Much credit must also be given to Kwagala-Kyegimbo's church and family. Her pastor at New Vision International Church in Vista, as well as other area churches have helped her tremendously with support and donations. Her children have also been supportive and given their mother lots to be proud of.

All nine children, who are now between the ages of 16 and 25, are achievers. Six of them were adopted by Kwagala-Kyegimbo when her sister was killed in Africa. The oldest has two degrees from UCSD in math and physics and will attend grad school. The oldest daughter will graduate in May from UCLA with a Masters Degree in criminology and she wants to go to law school and eventually become a judge. Another will also graduate in May with a sociology degree from Biola University and hopes to become a child psychologist while another son has earned a business degree from San Marcos. The other daughter in the family is in pre-pharmacy at UCLA with a goal of attending medical school.

One of the homes being constructed at the orphanage in Uganda. The home will house 10 children and the entire orphanage will have homes for 70 children.



The youngest four are still deciding their future course - the two that just graduated high school are currently enrolled at Palomar College for a year to play football (mom said she'd let them play football for a year) and then they are off to UCLA. The other two are still in high school - a junior and a sophomore.

"I really enjoyed my kids," she said. "Seven boys are a lot of fun - I can't begin to tell you. We enjoy each other and they love their mom."

Kwagala-Kyegimbo's gift of giving doesn't stop with the orphanage in Africa. She has her heart set on helping in Mexico, too.

"I wish I could do more every time I see these children," she said. "When they see you, they see hope. I can not let them down, and I pray I can do more."

"My goal now is to reach out to Mexico," she added. "I have already visited once. They are just next door, but what a vast difference."

"It's been amazing how one person can make a difference. I want to be able to look back and say I did my part."



Juliet Kwagala-Kyegimbo

Deaf Services Unit, continued

establishment of a Deaf Courthouse.

"Los Angeles County has a courtroom (for Deaf clients)," said Shelton. "Here (in San Diego County), the court reports these

Consumer Protection Day March 24th

The third annual Consumer Protection Day, a coordinated effort with the District Attorney's office, [Aging & Independence Services](#) and other government and nonprofit organizations, will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 24, at the new exhibit hall at the Town & Country Resort Hotel, 500 Hotel Circle North in Mission Valley.

For the first time, part of Consumer Protection Day will be shown live on a video Web cast that will be available on the District Attorney's Web site: www.sdcda.org. People unable to attend the event can watch it live and even send in questions via their computers from 9 a.m. to noon.

The event, hosted by Supervisor **Pam Slater-Price** and District Attorney **Bonnie M. Dumanis**, will have speakers and more than 40 exhibits that focus on educating participants on how to avoid being victims of scams and fraud. There will be a panel of consumer reporters, such as KGTV's Marti Emerald, plus a panel of consumer protection experts, with information about investment fraud, what to look for in hiring a caregiver, charity scams and more.

More than 1,200 people are expected to attend, many of them older adults. Seniors are unfortunately common targets of con artists.



County residents can receive valuable information at the annual Consumer Protection Day event.

Sponsors include AIS, the District Attorney's office, AARP, Elder Law & Advocacy, the California Department of Consumer Affairs, San Diego City Attorney's office, Sharp HealthCare and the Town & Country Resort Hotel.

Reservations are required for this free event. See www.sharp.com/seniors or call (800) 827-4277 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"Keys to Success" Program Continues

Volvo has decided to continue funding the "Keys to Success" program. To date, 76 foster youth have taken part and 24 have earned their driver's license.

[Child Welfare Services](#), along with the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation and Volvo Cars of North America, introduced the Volvo "Keys to Success" Scholarship program in September, 2005. The program assists current and former foster youth with obtaining driver's education and driver's training in preparation for obtaining a provisional permit and a driver's license.

Driver's education is no longer available in most

public school settings. Because of that, obtaining driver's education requires the student to attend a private driving school for a fee. While state funding for foster youth provides for their general well being, it does not take into consideration such "perks" as the cost of driver's education and training.

Having a driver's license provides a measure of independence and stability to foster youth. In addition to making the youth better, safer and more responsible drivers, the Volvo "Keys to Success" program also helps foster youth build their self-esteem, which is an important aspect in their development and will help ensure their success later in life.

HHSA Employee Satisfaction Committee Update

Thanks to all of you who recently completed the County's annual employee satisfaction survey. Your input really does make a difference. In fact, after seeing the results of the survey a year ago, **Jean Shepard**, Director, and **Paula Landau-Cox**, Director of Operations, formed an Agency-wide Employee Satisfaction Committee, consisting of any Agency employees who wished to join. The 50-person committee met monthly for a little over one year.

After extensive discussion, which included guest speakers from Department of Human Resources (DHR) and Agency Human Resources, the committee developed four specific recommendations, that if implemented, they believe would assist in improving employee satisfaction.

The recommendations were then presented to the Agency Executive Team on January 17 by volunteers from the Agency-wide committee (**Rea Alvarez**, **Martha Armenta**, **Jill Bolden**, **Gilbert Jimenez**, **Ramona Maag**, **Monica Miller**, and **John Rasmussen**). The recommendations focused on the need for, and importance of, open communication and good interpersonal skills in the workplace.

The Agency Executive Team had excellent questions and a great deal of discussion which carried over to their February 7 meeting. At that meeting, the following decisions were made on the four recommendations:

1. Issue: The Human Resource process is complicated and confusing, so employees get frustrated and don't know how to move through the system.

Recommendation: Develop optional training for Agency employees that addresses frequently asked questions about Human Resources. Audience needs to remain small so the session is interactive.

Outcome: DHR will provide training quarterly. The first session will be given to the Employee Satisfaction Workgroup and the Agency Departmental Personnel Officers (DPO's). Others interested in the training may attend future trainings.

2. Issue: Ineffective communication dampens employee morale by creating uncertainty and misinformation.

Emergency Survival Program

The March theme is "Tsunamis," what to do before, during and after a tsunami. [The County's emergency page](#) will provide valuable information in the event of a disaster.



Recommendation: Provide Interaction Management Training to all Managers and Supervisors, with a goal to enhance interpersonal communication skills.

Outcome: Provide a mandatory three-day Interaction Management training for all Agency Supervisors/Managers. Plan to train 600 managers/supervisors in one year by providing trainings to groups of 25.

3. Issue: Feedback on job performance comes only from an individual's superior.

Recommendation: Implement a 360-degree evaluation to gain insight into every employee's strengths and development needs, by obtaining feedback from an employee's peers and subordinates.

Outcome: Agency HR to develop a 360-degree evaluation tool and process, to be presented to the Agency Executive Team for further review and discussion.

4. Issue: When reviewing a job application, County Human Resources looks at Current employees' qualifications based on the standard job description, without giving credit for "other duties as assigned."

Recommendation: Count on-the-job work experiences (special projects, volunteering, "other duties as assigned"), when applying for future employment opportunities within the County.

Outcome: Agency to discuss with County Human Resources as this is a change that would impact the entire County.

The Agency-wide Employee Satisfaction Committee had excellent discussions and developed very meaningful recommendations. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate.

KUDOS ♦ KUDOS

Alice Olliff, Central Region Public Health Nurse II, was personally singled out as a "miracle worker and a treasure" for the parents in need at the 54th Family Resource Center. A social worker called to say "thank you" for all of Olliff's efforts as she continues to work with parents. Olliff points out that it's no different than what all Public Health Nurses do. "I think that nurses making visits to the home is a powerful way to help families," Olliff said. Olliff is one of our dedicated nurses who always takes that extra step to help our families and their children.

NAMI Walk on April 21st

The annual NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) walk will take place in Balboa Park on Saturday, April 21. Please join the Agency's [Behavioral Health](#) department in this effort to support [Mental Health](#) programs in our community.

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons living with serious mental illness and their families. NAMI, founded in 1979, has become the nation's voice on mental illness with organizations in every state and in over 1,100 local communities across the country. They work to meet the NAMI mission through advocacy, research, support and education.

One in five people will be treated for a biological brain disorder at some point in life. Financial support that NAMI receives from the annual walk is used for its programs that increase mental health recovery and reduce mental illness stigma.

Join San Diego County's NAMI Walk 2007 for the Mind of America. Become a member or support the County Behavioral Health Trail Blazers. Your family and friends can also join the team!

Location: Balboa Park: 6th and Quince
Date: April 21, 2007
Distance: 2/5 K
Check-in: 7:00 am **Start Time:** 8:00 am

For more information about this event, please contact **Velia Fematt** at (619) 584-5086 or via email: velia.fematt@sdcounty.ca.gov

If you would like to register online to join the County Behavioral Health Trail Blazers, [click here](#).

PA/PG Auction March 17

The next [auction](#), featuring an outstanding collection of items from approximately 20 estates, will be held on Saturday, March 17 at 5201 Ruffin Road in Kearny Mesa. Registration and viewing of items begin at 8:00 a.m. Vehicles will be auctioned at 8:30 a.m. and all other items will follow. Customers are required to pay for and pick up the auction property by 2:00 p.m. that day. For more information phone (858) 694-3500.

By the Numbers

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TB is Preventable and Curable!

Tuberculosis (TB) is an ancient disease. It's caused by bacteria, which spreads from person to person through the air. People with close and prolonged sharing of air with someone sick with TB (e.g., family, co-workers, friends) are at highest risk of becoming infected. The good news is that TB is curable and preventable.

What can you do?

1. Get tested. Certain individuals are at higher risk for TB including those who are elderly, have weakened immune systems (e.g., diabetes, certain medications, HIV), have a history of homelessness or incarceration, were born or travel outside the U.S., and certain occupations (e.g., health care worker). If you have any of these risk factors, talk to your provider about getting tested for TB infection. There are two tests: a skin test and a new blood test.
2. Educate yourself if you are infected. A positive test means you have TB germs in your body. A chest X-ray shows if TB has affected your lungs. Discuss treatment options with your provider. You cannot spread TB until it is in your lungs. Early treatment can prevent disease from developing.
3. Call [County TB Control](#) if you think you were exposed to someone with TB disease. The symptoms of TB disease include chronic cough, coughing blood, fevers, and weight loss. All health providers are required to call TB Control if they suspect TB in a patient, but sometimes the diagnosis is initially overlooked or a person does not seek care.

If you want further advice about getting tested, a presentation for your work unit, or have other questions call (619) 692-8245. Information is also available on the [TB Control website](#).

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with
HHSA Director **Director of Operations**
Jean M. Shepard **Paula Landau-Cox**

First Friday of each month • 8 a.m. - noon
(619) 515-6555

East Region Creating "Relationships of the Heart"

In every child's life there seems to be the need and longing to feel connected to a peer, family and community members as well as to their neighborhood. East Region is working to fill this void through the Neighborhoods for Kids vision.

East Region is reaching out to community members to take ownership of their community and make a difference in the life of a child. People's occupation and affiliations really don't matter. What's most important is that they care, and have the desire to help the community and children.

There are three new intergenerational opportunities for volunteers to become "Grammas" or "Grampas." They can participate in Team Decision Making meetings, become a Foster Home Supporter or become a Teen Mentor.

One opportunity is to support Team Decision Making meetings which are held with foster parents and guardians. Caregivers often bring children with them, but children cannot attend the meetings and so playmates and story tellers are needed to entertain the children while their caregivers are in the meetings (which usually last for 1 to 2 hours). East Region is recruiting senior volunteers to be on call when such meetings are scheduled.

A second opportunity involves working as a Foster Home Supporter. It is an understatement to say that foster parents face many challenges. They sometimes open their home to new children with very little notice. They may have multiple children that attend several schools with different schedules, and there are doctor and dentist appointments as well as parent/teacher conferences to attend.



From left to right: volunteers Pene Manale, George Manale, Faith Lewis, Beverly Gray and James Gray take part in a Team Decision Making training.

A Foster Home Supporter is someone who understands these challenges and is willing to provide respite for the foster parent. Support can be in the form of entertaining the children while a foster mom makes dinner or does the laundry without interruption, making a picnic lunch for the children while foster parents go to a movie, or attending a soccer game at one school while a foster dad attends a play at another school. This volunteer role is like an external family member.

The third opportunity for volunteering is as a Teen Mentor. These remarkable mentors offer encouragement to foster teens nearing high school graduation. Often this important life benchmark is elusive and foster teens are challenged to stay the course.

The mentors are assigned to several at-risk teens at a high school. The

mentor seeks out the support of counselors, teachers and coaches who have a deep interest in the success of these students.

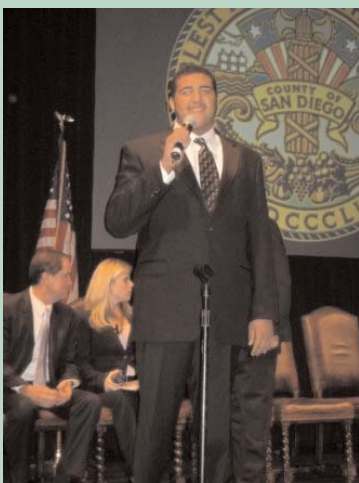
Intergenerational contact is very important and all of these programs allow young children to benefit from the knowledge, experience, and energy of seniors who care about them as an individual.

If you are interested in being an intergenerational volunteer or know someone that might be interested in these volunteer opportunities, call:

Su Hamano
Volunteer Coordinator
(619) 971-1560

SPA Student Sings National Anthem at State of the County Address

Leroy Daniels, a [San Pasqual Academy](#) student was invited to sing the National Anthem at the State of the County Address by County Board of Supervisor Chairman **Ron Roberts**. Leroy performed a beautiful classic version of the anthem at the University of San Diego's Shiley Theater before the State of the County Address was given by Roberts.



San Pasqual Academy student Leroy Daniels sings the National Anthem at the State of the County Address.

Leroy is no stranger to big performances. Last fall, he performed one of his original compositions with the San Diego Symphony, led by world-renowned conductor Jung-Ho Pak, who is also the Artistic Director of the San Diego Chamber Orchestra.

Investment & Retirement Symposium

The first weekday evening Investment & Retirement Symposium will be held on Wednesday, March 28.

The event will feature Ray Lucia, CFP, the author of "Buckets of Money" and a nationally recognized expert in the field of financial and business management and Jeannette Garretty, Ph. D., a Wells Fargo Private Client Services Senior V.P.

The symposium is being held at the Four Points by Sheraton at 8110 Aero Drive. Registration starts at 5:30 p.m. and the presentation is scheduled to run from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 for two, and includes dinner and free parking. Space is limited, however, and reservations are required.

Call **David Baker** at (619) 531-5454 for registration & information.

KUDOS ♦ KUDOS ♦ KUDOS ♦ KUDOS

IHSS MediCal Unit

Ana Armendariz is a share-of-cost social worker in the IHSS MediCal Unit at the Southeast Family Resource Center. According to the letter, she has assisted many MSSP Care Managers with problems all year.

"She is prompt, courteous and attentive, not only with peers but with clients as well. Every time I have asked her for some information about a client (whether or not she was the case worker) she found out information for me and helped my client.

She goes above and beyond her assigned duties and shows compassion in her work. She returns calls promptly, provides accurate information and is truly a star employee.

At this time, when there are so many new programs and rules in the share of cost unit, Ana has really proven to be a life saver.

I hope she is rewarded for her excellent service not only to the community but also for her interaction with peers."

Maternal, Child and Family Health Services

Maria R. Velasco, Intermediate Clerk with HHSA's Maternal, Child and Family Health Services Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program, was recently commended by the parent of an asthmatic child for helping to obtain treatment and medicines for the child's asthma.

The grateful parent wrote to Maria saying, "Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your help."

Send in kudos!

Proud of a coworker? Send text (and photos): thomas.christensen@sdcounty.ca.gov - or contact your section editor, listed on page 9.

HHSA Events Calendar - Check out what's happening, or, advise your Web contact to post events.

SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY STUDENT NAMED FOOTBALL ALL-AMERICAN

Michael Fields is Only Californian to Make 2006 Elite 8-Man High School Team

San Pasqual Academy senior Michael Fields is the only California student to be named to the 2006 Elite 8-Man High School All-American Team. Fields, a senior set to graduate this year from the Academy, was selected as an all-purpose back and kick returner by the Elite 8-Man High School team's 68-member panel.

Fields had more than 2,200 yards on offense and 29 touchdowns this year as a member of the Academy's Dragons football team, and is one of nine other offensive players and three special teams players from across the nation to be chosen for the Elite 8.

"This is what the Board of Supervisors envisioned when developing the Academy," said Board of Supervisors Chair **Ron Roberts**, who with Supervisor **Greg Cox** championed the San Pasqual Academy. "We wanted it to be a place where foster youth had the opportunity to discover and nurture their talents and strengths, and Michael Fields' selection to this team illustrates that."

"We at the County couldn't be more proud of Michael Fields," said Supervisor Cox. "His talent and drive have scored points for his own future success and that of the San Pasqual Academy."

"He's graceful, he can cut on a dime, he can take a hit," Dragons coach **Bob Manning** said. "He was named Player of the Year for the Citrus League two years in a row. He will make a lot of people proud."

The San Pasqual Academy Dragons were undefeated in 2006 and posted an 11-1 season in 2005. The San Pasqual Academy, founded in 2001 by the San Diego Board of Supervisors, is the first-in-the-nation residential education campus for foster youth.

Walk for Recovery March 25

Come out and enjoy the sunshine on Sunday, March 25, and cheer on the County of San Diego marching in the Walk for Recovery, 2007 as the "More Than 12 Steps" team.

The California Walk for Recovery 2007 is a community-based event benefiting alcohol, drug, and mental health programs throughout San Diego. Staff from the Agency are welcome to participate in this event celebrating recovery and supporting treatment services.

Where: Balboa Park, 6th and Laurel

When: Sunday, March 25th; event starts at 8:00 a.m.

County team contact: **Rick.Santos@sdcounty.ca.gov**

More information on the walk is available by [clicking here](#).

DIVERSITY 101

This is the second in an informational series on the Agency's diversity policies and practices:

Can you guess how many different languages Agency employees speak in an effort to ensure the best service for our clients?

We currently have 1,186 bilingual employees that speak 15 different languages: American Sign Language (1), Arabic (10), Cambodian (8), Chinese (1), Farsi {Persian} (1), French (1), Hmong (1), Laotian (7), Russian (1), Somali (4), Spanish (1056), Tagalog (49), Thai (1), Turkish (1) and Vietnamese (36).



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San Pasqual Academy and AT&T: A Perfect Match

In January, the AT&T Foundation awarded [San Pasqual Academy](#) a \$5,000 grant to purchase a 20-inch flat screen iMac computer and five Adobe Photoshop CS2 software programs for use in the Technology and Career Information Center. This funding creates additional opportunities for San Pasqual Academy students to develop their computer skills and showcase their multi-media talents.

Academy students are very technologically savvy. They have repeatedly earned top honors, including Best of Show and Best in Class at the San Diego County Fair, for their multi-media submissions. The multi-media classes are a top pick for elective courses on campus, where the students learn about graphic arts design and production, as well as website design. The students' investment in these classes is apparent in their work displayed throughout the Technology and Career Information Center.

The vision of San Pasqual Academy is to provide foster youth with the social, educational, vocational and life skills they need to become productive, successful adults. Integrating cutting-edge technology into the students' education, work experience and daily life expands their knowledge base, prepares them for post-secondary education and enables them to compete in today's high-tech job market.

San Pasqual Academy's Technology and Career Information Center walls are filled with design work done by students.



Left to right: **Diane Sitz, Rene Santiago, Dave Winfield, Jill Bolden, Glenn Amorosa, Sandee Stewart, Jean Vukotich, and Nila Breuhan.**

Padres Legend Visits Central

Padres' Hall-of-Famer Dave Winfield visited Central Region offices in late January to discuss "A Healthier San Diego," an initiative the Padres are considering launching in partnership with the Agency.

Winfield, a Senior Advisor and Vice President of the Padres organization, noted the Agency's past work with the Padres on various programs through the years.

"I know that if we are able to leverage a relationship between the San Diego Padres, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, the San Diego Unified School District, the California Endowment, sponsors and other interested or concerned partners, we can truly make a difference in this city where we all go to school, work and recreate," said Winfield.

[HHSA Events Calendar](#) - Check out what's happening, or, advise your Web contact to post events.

[Search the HHSA Web Site by Key Words](#)

This is a handy link to send out to people who are not yet familiar with our site.

Working at Agency Leads to Love Connection

For **Wilfredo** and **Marites “Tess” Perez**, the connection happened when they were assigned desks across from each other. For **Marcia** and **Don James**, it was a simple congratulations card. And in the case of **Miwa** and **Miguel Pumpelly**, it was just a matter of time.

The three couples, five current and one former Agency employees, can all trace their marriages back to their work with HHSA.

Wilfredo, an Administrative Analyst with Public Health Services’ Maternal, Child and Family Health Services said his marriage “was meant to be.”

“We had a mutual supervisor that played ‘Cupid’ and assigned us desks across from each other and we had to talk,” he said.

That desk-to-desk pairing and talking led to lunches and eventually a lifetime together traveling the world. Wilfredo says the couple’s favorite destinations are Australia, Belize, the Caribbean and London.

Tess is now a Contract Analyst for the First Five Commission. The couple has been married since 2000 and recently purchased a home in East Chula Vista. They have no children, but do have three cats.

“I married her and the cats,” said Wilfredo. “I had to become a cat lover - we call them our fur kids.”

The Agency played a big part in Marcia and Don’s pairing; the couple even had Agency Deputy Director **Dale Fleming** sing at their wedding.

The couple first met in Escondido, when Don took over Marcia’s caseload after she moved to a new position. But it wasn’t until later that the connection was made.

“Several years later, my sister worked in Escondido with Don and she told me he had been promoted and was now single,” said Marcia.

She sent him a congratulations card, which led to a response from him, and eventually, they decided to start dating. “That’s how it started - I was brave enough to send a card,” she said.

They dated for three years and got married on the third anniversary of their first date. That was over 11 years ago. Marcia is now the North Coastal FRC manager in Oceanside, and Don is a Medi-Cal Granted Supervisor in Kearny Mesa.

Miwa and Miguel, who married in 1997, met at the South Bay FRC, but it took a friend’s urging later to get them together.



Tess and Wilfredo Perez on a trip to Paris.

“We knew who each other was (at South Bay), but we didn’t really talk or socialize,” said Miwa. After she transferred to Kearny Mesa, they had a mutual friend put together a social outing that led to them eventually dating.

“It helped that we had done the same kind of job before and we had the same circle of friends,” said Miwa. “It made me comfortable with him sooner. His co-workers (jokingly) warned me to treat him right - they all thought he was so sweet.”

Miwa is now an analyst in the Agency budget office, while Miguel no longer works for HHSA - he’s now a Public Assistance Investigator for the San Diego County District Attorney’s office.

Agency Introduces Privacy Officer

The Agency’s **Compliance Office** has a new Privacy Officer.

David Nelson has begun his new duties as Privacy Officer after a 5-year stint as the Privacy and Security Officer for Yolo County.



Nelson is a Certified Information Privacy Professional/Government and Certified Information Systems Security Professional. His job is to help the Agency support the 16 different privacy laws that affect health care.

Child Care Employee Recognition Awards

The Agency's East Region Child Care team held its annual event celebrating teamwork, excellence and recognizing employees as part of how they do business. The team, made up of about 100 employees, has set an example of how their behavior and attitude create a positive first and lasting impression. In their actions they strive to exceed expectations, make a difference, find solutions to the most complex and challenging aspects of their daily activities and provide services throughout the County.



East Region Child Care team staff members

Agency Child Care administers programs funded by the California Dept. of Social Services and the California Dept. of Education with a budget of nearly \$43 million dollars. The program funds child care and child development services for families receiving [California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids \(CalWORKs\)](#), as well as other low-income families transitioning to self-sufficiency.

In San Diego County, the child care team provides support on a monthly basis to an average of 6,200 children. In 2006, 32,696 families and 63,089 children were served while an average of 21,000 calls were handled through their information line. Child Care staff as a team have been able to achieve a goal of 99.5% timely processing of checks for providers within 10 days.

Agency/Law Enforcement Team Up

How do you improve systems working together to keep children safe and secure from child abuse, neglect, or witnessing domestic violence?

On January 11, approximately 100 community stakeholders gathered together to address issues such as these at a forum entitled

"Strengthening Partnerships between Law Enforcement and Social Services Agencies" in San Marcos.

The event focused on strengthening internal and external service delivery systems to ensure that children and families exposed to violence receive the comprehensive array of services and resources needed to be safe and thrive in North County neighborhoods.

Highlights of the day included remarks by County Supervisor **Bill Horn**, HHSA Director **Jean Shepard**, HHSA Deputy Director **Nick Macchione**, Special Assistant to the District Attorney **Casey Gwinn**, Undersheriff **Bill Gore**, and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer **Harold Tuck**.



*North Regions Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** addresses the forum.*

Finance Academy Update

If you have a budget or fiscal job in the Agency and want to improve your financial skills, [FSSD's Finance Academy](#) is for you!

The first six-week series (one day per week) is scheduled to begin on April 24, 2007. Twenty-seven participants will have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of budget and fiscal issues, as well as the Agency's relationship to County and State infrastructure.

Graduates will be in a position to better support Agency programs, employees and clients with their improved knowledge of how to maximize and properly use revenue received by the County.

Due to limited class size, participants will be selected through nominations submitted by the Agency Executive Team. If this sounds like the opportunity for you, please let your manager know you'd like to be considered.

Have you submitted a [DIBBS](#) lately?